



The Waco VA had its 77th birthday in May 2009, but it almost didn't make it.

In April of 2003, Central Texans were shocked to learn of a proposal to shut down the Waco VA Hospital. Congressman Edwards led the bi-partisan fight, along with Senators Kay Bailey Hutchison and John Cornyn, to reverse ill-advised efforts to close this important local asset. In 2005, Senator Hutchison took the initiative to designate the Waco VA one of three Centers of Excellence for Mental Health and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Congressman Edwards secured \$3 million for cutting edge research at the facility into the root causes of PTSD.

Working with local leaders, Congressman Edwards is fighting hard to protect Waco's historic VA campus, which provides vital medical care to veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country, as well as 800 good-paying jobs for the Waco community.

After a long fight, on December 2, 2006, VA Secretary Jim Nicholson announced that the Waco VA would remain open and no services would be reduced.

However, Congressman Edwards believes the community must continue to move forward and focus on the the future of the Waco VA. There are still unused facilities on the Waco Campus. The team of veterans, local leaders and elected officials who were instrumental in making the case to save the hospital must continue to work together toward a vision for better using the campus to serve the needs of local veterans for the next 77 years.

Edwards, as the Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee that funds the VA has been in frequent contact with VA leaders to emphasize the importance of the Waco VA and to promote initiatives for improving services on the campus.

A record level of \$17.7 billion in increased funding for the VA budget authored by Edwards since 2007 also increased the number of employees at the Waco VA hospital and the Waco Regional office by more than hundred each, and made possible \$49 million for five new construction projects on the Waco VA campus. Since 2006, Congressman Edwards has also secured \$7.3 million for innovative PTSD research at the Waco VA.

Any thoughts? Comments? Questions? Let us know what you [think](#).

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